

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1, 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 USC Section 102(b) as being anticipated by Inubushi (U.S. 5,901,834). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants' invention, as recited by claim 1, includes a feature which is neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record, namely:

...a light-emitting section of an electroluminescent (EL) device...

...said push button extending through said light-emitting section...

Applicants' representative has carefully reviewed Fig. 1 of the Inubushi reference. The Official Action argues that Fig. 1 of Inubushi illustrates pushbutton 4 extending through EL device 26. Despite careful review of Inubushi's Fig. 1, Applicants' representative has been unable to locate where pushbutton 4 extends through EL device 26. As far as Applicants' representative can determine, pushbutton 4 sits above, and only above, EL device 26. In fact, Inubushi discloses hollow convex portion 25 which separates pushbutton 4 from EL device 26. Thus, Inubushi lacks Applicants' claimed feature of a pushbutton extending through an EL device. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over the art of record.

Claim 4, while not identical to claim 1, is also patentable over Inubushi for reasons similar to those set forth above with regard to claim 1.

Claim 5 is patentable over Inubushi by virtue of its dependency on allowable claim 4.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of Applicants' claims in view of Inubushi is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 USC Section 102(e) as being anticipated by Howell et al. (U.S. 6,590,508). It is respectfully submitted, however, that these claims are patentable over Howell for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants' invention, as recited by claims 1, includes a feature which is neither disclosed nor suggested by Howell, namely:

...a switch device...including a flexible member under a bottom...

...wherein on a lower surface of the flexible member, a moveable contact facing to a fixed contact is formed.

This is illustrated, for example, by Applicants' Fig. 1 where moveable contact for A is situated under a bottom of pushbutton 1A. Furthermore, moveable contact for A is situated below flexible member 4. Moveable contact 4A faces fixed contact 3A.

This is different than Howell. In Howell, the flexible member is located along sides of pushbutton shaft. Thus, Howell's EL element cannot be placed under his pushbutton. This restricts the amount of light that may be transmitted from his EL device through his pushbutton. By contrast, in Applicants' claim 1, the flexible member (for example item 4 in Applicants' Fig. 1) is located under a bottom of the pushbutton. Thus, the light emitting section can be placed directly under a portion of the pushbutton. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over the art of record.

Claim 4, while not identical to claim 1, is also patentable over the art of record for reasons similar to those set forth above with regard to claim 1.

The remaining claims are patentable by virtue of their dependency on allowable independent claims.

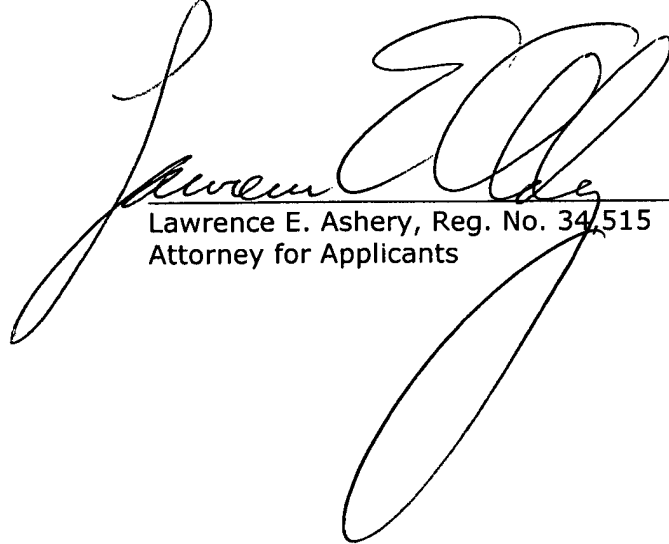
Claims 2, 6 and 7 have been rejected under 35 USC Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Inubushi in view of Shibamoto (U.S. 6,346,973). Claim 6, however, includes features similar to those found in claim 1. Furthermore, claims 2 and 7 depend from allowable independent claims. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2, 6 and 7 is respectfully requested.

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Amendment Dated February 28, 2005
Reply to Office Action of December 9, 2004

MAT-8230US

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth above, the above-identified application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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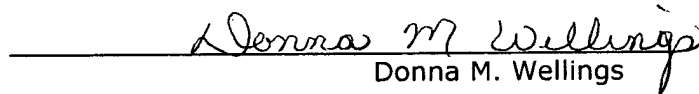
LEA/dmw

Dated: February 28, 2005

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